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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000193

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [GR](#) [PTER](#) [AMB](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH MPO FOCUSED ON RECENT ATTACK

REF: A. ATHENS 4660

[B](#). TD 314/002126-05

[C](#). ATHENS 4040

[D](#). SECSTATE 9866

Classified By: AMB. CHARLES P. RIES, REASONS 1.4 (B)

[1](#). (S/NF) Summary: The Ambassador paid an introductory call on the Minister of Public Order, Yeorgos Voulgarakis on Tuesday, January 18. The MPO provided an update on the investigation into the shooting of a Hellenic Police Special Guard on December 31, and discussed his views about terrorism in Greece. The MPO indicated that it is not clear yet whether or not this was a terrorist incident, but he said he is satisfied with the investigation to date. The MPO told the Ambassador that he may travel to the U.S. at the end of February and was interested in an official schedule in Washington. RMAS Chief provided the information in reftel B. End Summary

[2](#). (S/NF) The Ambassador held his first meeting with Minister of Public Order, Yeorgos Voulgarakis on Tuesday, January 18. Ambassador was accompanied by the RSO and RMAS Chief. After the Ambassador offered condolences for the recent murder of the Hellenic Police Special Guard (reftel A), the MPO gave an update on the investigation, stressing that it was difficult to make a final determination as yet whether this was a terrorist incident. Nothing in the December 31 incident was typical of previous N17 or ELA attacks. The MPO believed that this attack was particularly "cruel;" terrorists didn't typically fire so many shots (total of 16 were fired) at their victim. Furthermore, while his investigators expected a proclamation by the perpetrators to be delivered sometime after the attack; this has yet to occur. The MPO did seem to lean towards linking the attack on the Special Guard to the attack on the police bus convoy in October (Reftel C). There had been no proclamation left after that attack either, but in his mind, that was clearly an extremist attack. He stated that if these attacks were terrorist attacks, they were something totally new and demanded extensive and systematic investigation from Day 1.

[3](#). (C) The MPO then confided to the Ambassador that there was some indication that this may not be a terrorist attack, but that he didn't want to provide the details at this point. He would have a better handle on this situation in about one month's time with the help of several witnesses who are enabling the police to construct a picture of what happened. This information includes surveillance at the British residence a month prior to the attack. The MPO feared that if he went public with this information, the pace and intensity of the investigation (in his own building) would slow, and that it was critical to investigate this as a terrorist attack until proven otherwise. The MPO told the Ambassador that both the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister are being routinely apprised as to the exact status of the investigation.

[4](#). (S/NF) The RMAS chief provided the MPO with the information provided in reftel B. The MPO's reaction was that the group responsible for the attack could be a new one that is receiving its inspiration from previous terrorist attacks in Greece. The MPO described Greek attempts to investigate this new wave of terrorism (multiple recent attacks against the police, but not necessarily this specific attack alone), but admitted they were having difficulties penetrating domestic groups due to the fact that foreigners (Albanians and Bulgarians specifically) were being recruited to commit the crimes. He indicated that the GoG would attempt to utilize foreigners itself to penetrate these groups. He stated that the Hellenic police were proceeding positively in their exploitation of cell phones and that he was satisfied with the results of the investigation so far. Ambassador offered the services of US law enforcement agencies, especially forensics assistance, stating that we needed to know whether or not we have to change our security profile to better protect ourselves against an impending attack. Ambassador assured MPO that if he utilized assistance, the USG would work to keep that fact out of public view. The MPO reiterated his view that this attack

was not meant to target the UK military attache. He stated that the Attach had not wanted extraordinary protection (other than the Special Guard who was killed). On December 31, in fact, he had been outside of the residence for quite sometime before the attack saying good-bye to guests. Had the terrorists wanted to attack him, it could have been done easily. The MPO also asked the Ambassador if the Embassy was satisfied with our current police protection. The RSO stated that for now, we were happy with the coverage.

15. (SBU) The meeting concluded with the MPO advising the Ambassador that he intended to travel to the U.S. during the last ten days in February--in NY, Washington and possibly Chicago-- to speak on the Summer Olympics to Greek-American groups. In this connection he would be seeking official meetings in Washington. The Ambassador inquired if the MPO had heard about the planned Counterterrorism conference in Riyadh scheduled for early February (reftel D). The MPO stated he had heard nothing about it from the MFA, but would look into it.

16. (C) Comment: The MPO seemed open in his discussions about the attack on the Special Guard. He also appeared frustrated and unwilling to offer any firm conclusions about the attack. Given that reftel B hit so close to home, it should provide an impetus for deeper cooperation with US authorities in this investigation, possibly opening the doors for better discussions during the MPO's proposed trip in February. End Comment.